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Folk-Lore.

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CINDERELLA AND BRITAIN.

The following paper is the first of a series in which, it is hoped, students of folk-tales will discuss and criticise the immense mass of material brought together by Miss M. Roalfe Cox in her volume Cinderella, *recently published by the Folk-lore Society. As, in spite of a sufficiently definite statement of the purport of this paper in the third paragraph, it seems to have been misapprehended by some of those who did me the honour of criticising it when it was read before the Folk-lore Society, I would again insist:* (a) *that I deal not with the Cinderella tale as a whole, but with certain elements of it alone;* (b) *that I deal with these briefly, and by way of reference to Miss Cox's pages, where fuller details should be sought;* (c) *that, with a few trifling exceptions, I confine myself to the material brought together by Miss Cox. All references, save where explicitly stated otherwise, are to Miss Cox's volume.*

THE Society, no less than Miss Cox, may be proud indeed of the noble volume in which are retold the varied chances and adventures that befell the despised stay-at-home sister, to whom in the end came riches, and power, and princely rank. Have we not here a symbol of our study's fate? Long relegated to the cinder-heap and the goose-green, is not Folk-lore now essaying her hidden robes of golden cloth and starry sheen? And may we not cherish the hope that she shall be set in her rightful place, to which the envious sisters have so long denied her access? When that comes, we may, I think, engage on her behalf that she will act like Perrault's heroine, rather than like those fiercer representatives of a prehistoric savage past

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whom we meet with outside Perrault's influence. There shall be no red-hot shoes, nor spiked barrels, but the arrogant stepsisters shall be wedded to gentlemen of the Court and suitably provided for.

May we not carry this symbolising process somewhat further? We all know how the Prince was twice deceived; how, but for the little bird, he would, seemingly, have contented himself with the "clipit" bride. Is not this the picture of official science and official literature which have so long taken all manner of deceiving phantoms for the true expression of what the folk believes and fancies? And may we not look upon the folk-lore student as the little bird whose duty it is to denounce the pretender and reveal, no matter how disfiguring her disguise, the true princess? Doubtless, too, though the history is silent concerning them, there were partisans enough of the false brides to vilify the little bird as a pedantic nuisance who couldn't be content with things as they seemed to be, but must needs go grubbing in the ingle-nook and other obscure and unsavoury places.

To duly synthesize the mass of facts Miss Cox has analysed is a task to try the hardiest. Best perhaps that each student should select that aspect of the question to which he attaches special importance, and, neglecting all others, insist upon it alone. True, it will be forced into undue prominence, but amid the shock of conflicting pleas this defect will be remedied. This, at any rate, is the method I would here apply; the point which has struck me, and which I would impress upon you very briefly, and utilising solely the material brought together by Miss Cox, is the long and close connection between certain elements of the Cinderella story-group and the literature and legendary history of these islands.

Miss Cox's division of the Cinderella story-group is threefold (p. xxv), corresponding to the type-forms of **Cinderella, Catskin, Cap o' Rushes.** This last form opens with the heroine being driven forth on account of supposed

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undutifulness to her father. As Mr. Hartland showed long ago (The Outcast Child, *Folk-Lore Journal*, IV), the earliest mediæval example of this incident is Geoffrey of Monmouth's story of Lear and his Daughters, a tale we may regard with every reason as drawn from then current Welsh tradition. So far, British origin (immediate origin, at least) of a not unimportant element of the story-cycle is certain. It should be noted that in this oldest example, the outcast heroine, daughter of a British king, weds a French prince, as happens in so many stories of the second type-form, now about to be discussed.

The second, the **Catskin** type-form, opens as a rule with the unnatural marriage incident. Moved by his daughter's likeness to, or by her ability to wear some special part of, the dead mother's attire, a king seeks his daughter in marriage. She resists, and is cast forth or flees. Often, her hands are hewed off and she is set adrift in a boat. The theme was a favourite one in the Middle Ages, and the numerous examples collected by Miss Cox (pp. xliii-lxvi) may be grouped as follows. I cite the continental versions (*i.e.*, such as are not written in England or by Englishmen) first :—

A. The father is a king or lord in France ; the heroine seeks refuge in England, whose king she weds. Thus, in the fifteenth century Spanish romance *Victorial*, the story there being told to account for the origin of the wars between France and England.[1] A fifteenth century Italian version of the story by Bart. Fazio avows the same object, but the *rôles* are inverted : the unnatural father is an Edward of England, the heroine weds a French dauphin.[2] In the fifteenth century German romance of Hans der Büheler (p. liii) the heroine is a French princess, and it is at London that she weds the English king.

B. In the oldest[3] continental version, the twelfth century

[1] P. xlvi. [2] P. lxiii.

[3] I give this on the authority of Merzdorf, quoted by Miss Cox (p. liii), who follows, however, as far as I can judge, a much later redaction than the alleged twelfth century original.

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Alexandre de Bernai's French metrical romance, *De la belle Helayne de Constantinople*,[1] the heroine is a daughter of Antony, Emperor of Constantinople, and it is a Henry of England whom she weds. A widely-spread German chap-book goes back to this romance (p. lii).

C. The father is a king of Hungary, the daughter comes to Scotland. Thus, the *Roman de Manekine*,[2] one of the most popular of French thirteenth century romances, from which the fourteenth century French play, *Un Miracle de Nostre Dame*, seems derived (p. lix).

D. The story of St. Dipne (first met with in France at the end of the seventeenth century), daughter to a king of Ireland. In accordance with the hagiological nature of this story the heroine's fate is martyrdom and not wedlock (p. lxv).

So far the continental versions. I have not cited the forms from which the connection with Britain is absent, but these all seem to be later than and dependent upon the type-forms cited above.

On turning to stories written in England we are at once confronted with a remarkable counterpart[3] to the *Victorial* version in the Life of the second Offa by the thirteenth century Matthew Paris. This tells how a beautiful but evil Frankish princess, doomed to exposure on the sea, reaches England, is seen and beloved of the Angle king. *Her* explanation of her banishment is, it should be noted, that she was fleeing marriage with a suitor of lowly birth sought to be forced upon her. Otherwise, there is no hint in this story of the unnatural marriage incident, but this is found, in its orthodox form, in the same Matthew's Life of the first Offa, where the erring father is a king of York.[4]

[1] Pp. liii, lv. [2] P. xlix.

[3] I use the word counterpart not as implying any literary filiation between the stories, but as applied solely to the way in which the incidents of the narrative are presented.

[4] Some very curious questions are raised by the Offa lives, questions

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A still more interesting English version is the story of Emare found in the early fifteenth century MS., Caligula, A ii. The names of the heroine's father and mother—Artyus, Erayne—at once betray connection with the Arthurian cycle. Emare is put out to nurse on her mother's death, and it is a chance sight of her, dressed in a rich robe of golden cloth, that rouses the father's passion. She, too, is exposed in a boat, lands in "Galys" (*not* France, which country is separately mentioned), and weds its king (pp. l-li).

I think it may be taken as certain that the continental versions are derived from English sources, also that the oldest English and continental versions are not directly connected, but both come down from an older stratum of

which can only be very briefly glanced at here. Matthew's story of the second Offa has been connected with that told in Beowulf of Offa and Thrytho, but the Beowulf Offa is, of course, the first, the continental Offa. The Beowulf story explicitly, and that told by Matthew of the second Offa implicitly, seem to fall under the King Thrushbeard formula, where a haughty and fierce princess, after disdainful and savage treatment of many suitors, is at length tamed by the right wooer.

This, the King Thrushbeard formula, seems to be represented in Miss Cox's analogues by the *Pecorone* story (p. li), where the princess is also from France (the disagreeable suitor being a German), and escapes to England. Here again it is marriage, and not incestuous marriage, that is shunned. But if this is so, as it would seem to be, with the Matthew Paris second Offa story, how are we to account for the fact of its being such a decided counterpart to the Victorial version? Was that also originally a Thrushbeard, rather than an unnatural marriage story? If so, the change must have been of old standing when the story was heard by its fifteenth century Spanish narrator, as the point of it (the explanation of the enmity between France and England) is implicated in the unnatural marriage opening, and could hardly arise with the other. (As to the Offa lives, cf. Ten Brink in Paul's *Grundriss*, ii, 534.) It should be noted that the after history of all these heroines belongs, as a rule, to the calumniated wife or Genoveva story-group, a story of great importance in early English literature, if, as seems likely, the eighth-ninth century poem, known as *The Wife's Complaint*, is a dramatic idyl based upon it.

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story-telling, elaborated, if not originating, in Britain. We notice, then, that one English form, Matthew's Life of Offa, connects the incident with the legendary history of the Teutonic race-element of our people, whilst the other rather indicates a Celtic origin. The latter, again, is favoured by Alexandre's version, which makes the heroine St. Helena of Constantinople. The part played by Helena, wife of Constantius and mother of Constantine, in Welsh legend is too well known to need emphasising. And Cynewulf's poem of *Elene* shows that she was popular also among the Englishmen. In this connection it is worth noting that, in the version of the *Manekine* story found in the Anglo-Norman chronicle of Nicolas Trivet, the heroine's name is Constance, a name derived, I think, from the Romano-British cycle. In this version the Catskin opening is missing, as it also is in Chaucer and Gower, who seem to have followed Nicolas Trivet.[1] As regards Matthew, it has been said that he is influenced by Saxo Grammaticus; this is possible, but it only shifts back the question, as any legends told by Saxo of the Angle Offa are likely, to my mind, to be the reflex of tales heard by Saxo's Danish fellow-countrymen during their stay in England.

Personally, I see no reason to postulate the exclusive attribution of the incident to either Celts or Teutons. But those who are so minded can hardly fail to underestimate the import of the Irish story which I was able to communicate to Miss Cox in time to be noted on the last page of her volume. This tells how Raghallach, the seventh-century King of Connaught, being warned that evil would befall him from his offspring, charged his wife to have her child slain. But the swineherd to whom she

[1] Pp. l-li. I do not, of course, quote this with any view of connecting Chaucer's *Man of Lawe's* tale with the Cinderella group. I am content if a probability is shown that it, like certain elements in the Cinderella stories, may be traced back, on one side, to the same stratum of legendary fiction.

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gave the babe for that purpose relents, and confides her to a hermit, by whom she is brought up. She becomes the fairest maid in Ireland, and her father, hearing of her beauty, and not knowing who she is, loves her, and takes her to himself. He refuses to put her away at the bidding of the saints of Ireland, is cursed by them, and dies a shameful death (p. 535).

The MS. in which this story is found is of the fifteenth century only; but the story forms a portion of annals which stop at the end of the tenth century. Parts of these same annals are found in eleventh century MSS., and the language of our story is, as Professor Meyer tells me, twelfth century in character. We shall not, then, do wrong in assigning the Raghallach story, as we have it, to the twelfth or preceding century, *i.e.*, it is at least of equal age with the oldest English or continental tales in which the unnatural marriage-incident occurs. But we can, I believe, look upon it as much older, substantially as old as the date of the personages it deals with, *i.e.*, as the seventh century. For the old war-chariot (which fell out of use during the period of the Viking invasions of Ireland, during, that is, the ninth and tenth centuries) is still the ordinary vehicle. We learn this from a delightful touch of the Irish story-teller, who, when he wishes to express the extent of Raghallach's passion, "his love towards her was such", says he, "that when her chariot went before, she must needs turn her face backwards upon him; whereas he, if his chariot led, would set his face to her. It is even thought that in Ireland none ever had done the like."

An interesting point in connection with this story is the air of probability it wears. Grant the premiss—the exposed child (a commonplace of early Irish story-telling[1])—and the sequence of incidents is a possible one, involving no such shock to our moral sense as do the other versions.

[1] Cf. *Folk-Lore*, ii, p. 87, "An early Irish version of the jealous stepmother and exposed child."

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I do not attempt to decide whether this is a mark of age, or the reverse.

But, it may be said, to establish the fact that the unnatural marriage-opening was a commonplace of story-telling in the British Isles is but a slight contribution to the solution of the Cinderella problem. Granted; yet the fact is interesting in itself, especially when taken in conjunction with the wide and long-standing spread of the Catskin-Cinderella form in this country. If, now, we turn to the first of Miss Cox's group-types, to **Cinderella** proper, we cannot, it is true, trace such early connection of any essential element with these islands, as we have done in the case of the **Catskin** and **Cap-o'-Rushes** types.[1] But we *can* show that of all existing versions of the true **Cinderella** tale it is one collected in these islands which presents obviously archaic features (which have well-nigh disappeared from the literary versions) in their most crude and striking form. I allude to the remarkable Gaelic tale, "The Sheep's

[1] If we could, we might safely regard the Cinderella problem as solved. What the terms of that problem are must be steadily borne in mind by all investigators. The earliest recorded *true Cinderella* story appears in Italy, in the first half of the seventeenth century (Basile's *La Gatta Cenerentola*); before that date we only find recorded two **Catskin** stories, both of the first half of the sixteenth century, one (which is without the unnatural marriage opening) French (Bonaventure des Periers), one Italian (Straparola). There is, so far as we at present know, neither in Classic, Oriental, Teutonic, or Celtic myth or saga, nor in mediæval romance or legend, any definite sequence of incidents which we could claim as being the ultimate origin of the Cinderella group, or from the existence of which we could argue the existence of that group at a date prior to that of the sixteenth-seventeenth century examples. There is, I believe, no other folk-tale of the same character and of equal importance with Cinderella of which this can be said. The Sleeping Beauty, The Calumniated Wife, The Supplanted Bride, The Exposed Child, all the familiar *dramatis personæ* of the *märchen*, are also familiar figures of pre-mediæval and mediæval myth, saga, and romance. Not so Cinderella. At the same time it is impossible (or, rather, it is absurd, for all things are possible to the paradox-mongerer) to maintain that the sixteenth-seventeenth century versions have originated the mass of Cinderella variants noted subsequently;

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Daughter," which I was only able to communicate to Miss Cox in time for her to print it on the last page but one of her book (p. 535). Here the animal parentage of the heroine, vaguely hinted at in so many versions, is definitely affirmed ; here, too, and here alone to my knowledge, hero and heroine are half-brother and sister. Note, again, that whilst the **Cinderella** type proper is absent from England, rich, on the contrary, in **Catskin** forms, an essential feature of which can be traced there so far back, Scotland, which yields us this archaic **Cinderella**, yields also half-a-dozen other **Cinderella** variants (p. xxvii).

To sum up. As regards two type-forms of the Cinderella group (the least important of the group, it is true), Britain yields the earliest literary treatment of essential elements ; as regards the first type-form, it yields one of the most, if not *the* most archaic example.

I refrain from any dogmatic induction. May this be imputed to me for righteousness, when it is remembered how many proudly-soaring theories are built upon a far narrower and less solid basis ! But I do claim that others should refrain from dogmatising likewise. And if any patriotic soul loves to think of the cinder-wench as starting forth from our land to conquer the world, I cannot deny there are grounds for holding this to be more than a mere pious opinion.

on the contrary, although one of these examples, Perrault's *Cendrillon* is perhaps the most famous of all literary folk-tales, they have practically not influenced this mass of later variants at all ; throughout Europe we still find traces of a far ruder, wilder, more archaic version than that which confronts us in the pages of Bonaventure or Basile, Straparola or Perrault.

Thus we have to account for the non-appearance in any form of the story, as a whole, prior to the sixteenth century (that certain elements appear, and appear abundantly, has been shown, I trust, sufficiently), and also to account for the singular peculiarities of its actual spread throughout Europe.

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